



Photo: Paul Cochrane

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Dean of Academic
Strategy

Central Saint Martins
University of the Arts London

Candidate Pack

Contents

01.	Introduction from the Provost	2
02.	Executive Summary	3
03.	About the University of the Arts London	4
04.	Our Collegiate Structure	5
05.	Research and Knowledge Exchange	6
06.	Central Saint Martins	7
07.	Our Locations and Facilities	8
08.	Central Saint Martins: Schools of Thought	9
09.	Role Description	10
10.	Person Specification	12
11.	Appointment Details and How to Apply	13

01. Introduction from the Provost

Thank you for your interest in the role of Dean of Academic Strategy. At Central Saint Martins, we are regenerating creativity by rethinking what an art and design college should focus on and how this might work. Throughout its history, Central Saint Martins has had a reputation for change-making through creative practice. Today, across art, design and performance, our students and staff create and practise ideas, materials and actions for a better future in a more-than-human world.

The College has a legacy of engaging with global debates about the visual and creative arts, performance and design, and the role they play in societal transformation. This is at the heart of what we do: we challenge what people think they know about the arts, performance, and design, and how it shapes and impacts us all.

We know that creativity is at the brink of great change and there is a galvanising call embedded in the heart of our [**University's Strategy**](#). To remain at the heart of creative education in an era of polarisation and new intelligences, a total rethink is underway in our systems, skills and the sectors we partner with. To build on the College's core spirit of interdisciplinarity and thematic integrity as an art school, CSM has embarked on an exciting College-wide transformation with three [**Schools of Thought**](#): C School [Culture], S School [Systems] and M School [Material]. There is a deliberate de-emphasising of disciplinary categories such as art, design and performance. The current naming strategy highlights the whole (C + S + M = CSM) and aims to allow space for working across schools and adapting to societal and planetary conditions as called for in our University's ambitious strategy.

Our CSM Schools are open, adaptive and (re)generative. Grounded by our disciplines, they foster communities – of staff, students and

collaborators – with a shared sense of purpose, practice, pedagogy and enquiry. The thematics of culture, systems and material invite conceptual challenge as they plot coordinates around our courses identifying challenges that each School can explore in its teaching, research and knowledge practices. There is space to ensure students and staff can approach issues of social, racial and climate justice through their practice.

The position of Dean of Academic Strategy (DAS) was introduced across all UAL colleges in 2018 and is a key position for both the College and the wider University. I myself held the post at Central Saint Martins from 2021 to 2022, and our current postholder – Allan Atlee – has recently been appointed as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) for UAL as a whole.

We hope you find this to be an exciting opportunity and will consider joining us on this important journey for art and design education. We look forward to receiving your application.

Professor Rathna Ramanathan

Provost, Central Saint Martins & Executive Dean for Global Affairs, University of the Arts London



02. Executive Summary

University of the Arts London is seeking a dynamic, strategic and highly experienced academic to join CSM as Dean of Academic Strategy. This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of education at one of the world's most influential creative arts institutions.

CSM has ambitious plans to regenerate and transform, building on the College's core spirit of interdisciplinarity and thematic integrity as an art school through Schools of Thought: [C School](#), [S School](#), and [M School](#).

Working with the Provost and the College Executive, the DAS is instrumental in shaping and delivering the University's Education Strategy in line with Central Saint Martins' purpose and proposition.

The College has ambitious plans to develop its courses and methods of delivery over the next four years, and the DAS will play a central role in the design and initiation of this plan. In particular, the DAS will work closely with the Deans of Schools to support them in developing their programmes and courses.

Central Saint Martins is also working on a bold Estates transformation. This will unlock a range of models with innovative methods of delivery and transdisciplinary content that enable access and lifelong learning. The DAS will oversee the academic dimensions of this plan; the role thus genuinely provides the opportunity to help shape the future of education at one of the world's most influential creative arts institutions.

Finally, the DAS has overall responsibility to ensure quality enhancement across the entire college portfolio. Working closely with the University's PVC Education and Students, as well fellow DASs in UAL's other colleges, the CSM DAS will ensure consistency of approach across the University.



Photo: Paul Cochrane

03. About the University of the Arts London

For the 7th consecutive year, University of the Arts London (UAL) has been ranked 2nd in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025 for Art and Design and is the top university offering undergraduate courses.

UAL offers an extensive range of courses in art, design, fashion, communication, computing, creative leadership, performing arts, and spatial practices, with graduates going on to work in and shape creative industries worldwide. Our diverse and talented community comprises over 5,000 academic, professional, and technical staff.

Across the University, we offer a learning environment in which originality is recognised, difference is respected, and excellence is pursued. Our values centre on social justice and environmental stewardship. We respect and encourage the academic freedom of our staff and the natural curiosity of our students.

The University's impact and engagement extends to the global stage through its international student body, affiliations and partnerships with other universities and creative organisations that share a passion for arts.

The University is led by an Executive Board, chaired by Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Stanton, and governed by a Court of Governors, chaired by David Isaac.

With just under 22,000 students from over 130 countries (49% of whom are from outside the UK), 6,000 staff, and an annual budget of circa £400 million, the University of the Arts London is Europe's largest specialist arts and design university.

Our University not only awards more than 7,000 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees each year, but also delivers short creative courses and executive education to over 13,500 students.

For more information, visit www.arts.ac.uk



Photo: Alys Tomlinson

04. Our Collegiate Structure

The University's colleges work together to enrich the student and staff experience and to increase their impact on the creative and cultural sectors, not only in London and the UK but also globally.

UAL is structured as a Collegiate University: each College has a distinctive academic ethos within a practice-led tradition, informed by its own distinctive history and relationships. Our students graduate with work that breaks boundaries, engages with our changing world, and challenges our preconceptions. From wherever in the world they come, they will go on to influence the way we all think and live.

The six constituent colleges are as follows:



Camberwell College of Arts offers courses in fine art and design and its unique studio culture gives students the freedom to explore their creativity and use facilities that embrace traditional craftsmanship and digital technology.



Central Saint Martins is a world leading centre for transdisciplinary art and design education, with courses covering a wide range of creative arts disciplines from art and architecture to business and curation, fashion, industrial and material design, and performance.



Chelsea College of Arts specialises in curating, fine art, graphic design communication, textile design, interior and spatial design. It provides students with a stimulating space and supportive atmosphere so they can develop their practice.



London College of Communication is a pioneering centre teaching courses in design, media and screen. It works at the cutting edge of new thinking and prepares its students to define the future of the creative industries.



London College of Fashion is a leading global provider of fashion education, research and consultancy. It offers undergraduate and further education courses, integrated and postgraduate masters, research degrees and short courses.



Wimbledon College of Arts has a long history of providing world class teaching in all aspects of technical arts for theatre, film and television, including acting, costume and stage design



Photo: Joy Kirigo

05. Research and Knowledge Exchange

Research and knowledge exchange are at the heart of our world-leading education and our drive to address global challenges and create positive social change. We place creativity at the heart of positive societal change and have a vibrant research and KE culture across our six colleges, University research centres, and institutes.

Through our research and knowledge exchange, we create pathways between the educational world and professional practice, providing unique opportunities for students, alumni and the creative industries. We work closely with a diverse and high-profile range of business, creative and cultural partners. We embed 'place' at the heart of our work to generate meaningful exchange and mutual benefit with our neighbours and with places and sectors where our expertise aligns to local priorities. In REF 2021, UAL was the largest submission to Unit of Assessment (UoA) 32: Art and Design/ 85% of our research, 90% of our impact, and 100% of our environment was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent. In KEF4 (2023) UAL performed strongly across several areas, including scoring 'Very High' in working with the public and third sector, local growth and regeneration and public and community engagement.

At Central Saint Martins, we are connected by a shared commitment to putting creative practice at the heart of understanding, doing, and making. We work with the intention addressing shared concerns and challenges, and generating new knowledge in the world.

Practice is more than a mode of making, it is a way of knowing, a space for experimentation, collaboration, disruption, and transformation. It is through practice that we continually reimagine what's possible.

Our research and knowledge exchange covers the entire spectrum of art and design and is realised in our teaching and through exhibitions, artworks, designs, books, policy, films, photography, fashion, textiles, craft, performance, architectural and spatial practices and more. Through our work we challenge thinking and innovate solutions to emerging and vital social issues.

We are proud of our centres and labs, including the acclaimed [Afterall](#) and [Future Denim Lab](#). We regularly work in collaboration with national and local government agencies, businesses, NGOs, scientific organisations and policy groups to deliver real-world impacts. Through interdisciplinary partnerships and networks, we develop joint research initiatives, consultancy and co-designed public engagement activity that contributes positively to society both locally and globally.

06. Central Saint Martins

The identity of Central Saint Martins is inherited from two groundbreaking arts and design schools: St Martin's School of Art (the oldest of the university's colleges, founded in 1854) and the Central School of Arts and Crafts. From these beginnings, both educational institutions developed radical creative practices and progressive social values in education. The two schools merged in 1989 to create Central Saint Martins.

Central Saint Martins' recent transformation began with a fundamental question: *'What does it look like when we work together at our best?'* This wasn't an abstract exercise. We ask students to be creative, adaptive, bold; to embrace complexity and imagine different futures. What could our universities achieve if we reorganised ourselves with the same creativity we demand from students? If we can't model the adaptive, experimental, principles-led thinking we claim to teach, why should anyone trust us to prepare the next generation for an uncertain future?

Creative education isn't primarily about self-expression. Approaching it as we are at Central Saint Martins, creativity becomes a methodology for engaging with uncertainty. It values prototyping over perfect solutions, holding contradictory ideas simultaneously, collaborating across difference, making abstract possibilities tangible—critical for navigating unpredictable futures.

At Central Saint Martins, we believe that art, design and performance can generate real, productive change. Our students create the ideas, materials, and actions for a better future. Creative practice combines the ability to imagine new futures with the means to deliver them. As such, artists and designers are equipped to address our urgent global challenges – from tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies to forging more equitable societies. Our disciplines and practices are often seen at Central Saint Martins as vehicles for protest, comment and community engagement. This is particularly the case with the current political and social context, against which our students have found means of expressing their personal and collective positions through creative practice.

What we do is always connected to others. Our community goes beyond building, beyond disciplines and beyond borders. From local neighbours to global partners, Central Saint Martins collaborates with others to build knowledge and transform objects, systems, and lives for the better. We understand that good things happen when people work together.



Photo: Ben Turner

07. Our Locations and Facilities

Our shared spaces – in Kings Cross and Archway – are hubs of interdisciplinary collaboration; places to share ideas, to problem solve, and to make lifelong friends and studio partnerships. The specialist workshops are the backbone of our courses, providing a place for students to make and create, with technicians on hand to share their expertise.

In 2011, we moved to our award-winning building in King's Cross. We sit at the heart of a dynamic part of London: Google, The Guardian, Tom Dixon, Universal Music, Camden Council, the Francis Crick Institute and many others are our neighbours and partners. In this fast-changing environment, we draw from our own history while always looking to the future.

The building houses a broad sweep of disciplines under one roof, encouraging creative generosity and

collaboration. Increasingly the work emerging from the College crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries, as students find hybrid and unexpected ways of working.

Find out about our shared spaces, studios and workshops at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London [here](#).



08. Central Saint Martins: Schools of Thought

Building on our core spirit of transdisciplinarity and thematic integrity, we have created three Schools of Thought that deliberately de-emphasise traditional disciplinary categories.

C SCHOOL emphasises **culture** as an urgent form of inquiry into the contemporary world, developing thinking and practice across diverse forms of artistic and performative exploration.

C School staff and students develop cultural production in, and across art, performance and curation that not only allows us to understand the present but also to imagine different futures.

S SCHOOL explores how, through different forms of designing, we can understand and intervene in the complex human **systems** that shape our world, to inform alternative futures.

The disciplines of S School investigate how different forms of design can challenge and change those systems so that people and planet can flourish. Spanning graphic communication and product design, architecture and environments, business innovation and creative enterprise, S School works across scales of space and time and often across disciplinary boundaries.

M SCHOOL investigates radical approaches to **materials**, making, and the construction of meaning, probing fashion, textiles, jewellery and material innovation.

The common thread across the disciplines within M School is creative attention to the materials we use, and how we can push the boundaries of what can be done with them. Many of the practices represented in M School have a strong historical context in the hands-on craft of designing, but M School goes well beyond this, embracing text, film, digital interactions, scientific materials innovation and multi-species thinking and regeneration.

Together, CSM Schools embody our principles of seeking common ground for contemporary practices to flourish, bringing practice to every space, and deepening external connections.



Photo: Paul Cochrane



09. Role Description

The Dean of Academic Strategy will work with the Provost to provide leadership of the delivery and development of Central Saint Martins' Academic Strategy and the academic aspects of the College Operating Plan.

The post holder will be accountable to the Provost of Central Saint Martins and Executive Dean of Global Affairs and will be a key member of the College Executive Group. You will work with the three Deans of School and the Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange to provide strategic coordination of the development and deployment of resources to ensure a culture of continuous improvement of academic provision and the student experience.

Alongside the PVC Education and Students, the Executive Dean: Student Journey, and the Provost of Central Saint Martins, you will lead cross-UAL strategic projects as appropriate and ensure the College academic strategy and operational plan are aligned to UAL's strategic objectives.

You will also oversee quality assurance and enhancement activities and processes in the College.

Finally, working to the Provost and with the Deans of School, the Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange, the Director of College Administration

and the Head of Technical Resources, you will oversee coordinated strategic planning, developing interconnected academic, technical and operational delivery to enhance student experience and enable staff productivity.

College-Specific Purpose

This role is central to delivering the College's Schools of Thought transformation, working with the Provost to coordinate academic planning, estates transformation, and future portfolio development across C School (Culture), S School (Systems), and M School (Material). In collaboration with College Executive members, the Dean of Academic Strategy will translate this transdisciplinary framework into operational delivery, aligning curriculum development, space planning, and academic resource deployment with the College's foundational architecture, whilst ensuring excellent academic quality and student experience throughout the transformation. This work will be undertaken in close partnership with the Director of College Administration who leads on the operational aspects of these strategic initiatives.

Main Responsibilities

- working to the Provost to lead the delivery in the College on UAL academic strategic priorities;
- leading on the development and delivery of the **Academic Strategy** and the academic aspects of the College Operating Plan, by working closely and collaboratively with the PVC Education and Students, the Provost, the Deans of School, the Associate Deans, the Director of College Administration, and fellow Deans of Academic Strategy across the University;
- having strategic input into academic resource allocation and **student number planning**, working to the Provost and closely with the Director of College Administration, including input into the processes for the setting and review of **recruitment** targets across the College, and working with colleagues to establish effective recruitment strategies and monitoring systems;
- leading an effective framework for **quality assurance and enhancement**, which delivers continuous improvement, meets agreed University and College KPIs, and aligns with the requirements of the Office for Students (this includes oversight of **course validation** and review processes on behalf of the College and ensuring high quality outcomes, with oversight of the preparations for all **external review and audit activities** for higher and further education);
- collaborating with the Directorate of Teaching and Learning, the Associate Deans and College colleagues to lead on the development and delivery of strategies for learning and teaching, retention and achievement, and improving student experience;
- overseeing **staff development** activities within the College to ensure the delivery of strategic priorities;
- overseeing and developing the operation of the College's **academic governance** structures;
- being a member of the College Executive Group;
- **representing the College** on Academic Quality Standards Committee and Academic Board, and deputising for the Provost in relation to academic strategy, including attendance at Executive Board as required;
- supporting the Provost and College Executive Group in the development of the College's academic portfolio.

Additional Duties

- performing duties and tasks consistent within the scope and grade of your role as reasonably may be expected and assigned to you from anywhere within the University;
- undertaking health and safety duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role;
- working in accordance with the University's **Staff Charter** and Dignity at Work Policy and anti-racism plans, promoting equality diversity and inclusion in your work;
- undertaking continuous personal and professional development, and supporting it for any staff you manage through effective use of the University's Planning and Review Conversations (PRC) scheme and staff development opportunities;
- making full use of information and communication technologies to meet the requirements of the role and to promote organisational effectiveness;
- conducting all financial matters associated with the role in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, as laid down in the Financial Regulations;
- contributing to the University's **Climate Action Plan**, which sets out our principles, commitments and goals towards climate justice and our socio-environmental purpose.

You may be required to work additional/different hours from time to time, if necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of your duties. This may include evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. You may also be required to regularly travel to other sites and internationally as necessary.

Key Working Relationships

- College Executive Group;
- Executive Dean: Student Journey, Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Students and Director of Education;
- Deans of Academic Strategy in other colleges;
- Deans of Schools;
- Director of College Administration;
- Head of Technical Resources;
- Associate Dean: Student Journey and Associate Dean: Educational Development and Quality;
- Dean: Research and Knowledge Exchange;
- Head of International Partnerships;
- College HR Business Partner;
- Staff Development Officer.

10. Person Specification

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following attributes:

Experience, Knowledge and Qualifications

- a postgraduate qualification, or practice equivalent, in art or design;
- widespread public or professional recognition as a leading authority in your subject or profession, based on demonstrated expertise;
- knowledge of past and present initiatives and trends in UK and global art and design, and of their relationship to government policy;
- knowledge of all aspects of quality assurance;
- knowledge of academic provision, trends and issues in universities, both national and global;
- detailed expertise in one or more field of art and design research and/or knowledge exchange, and of the mechanisms for managing and funding researchers and/or Knowledge Exchange academics;
- experience of initiating and leading strategic developments, including the creation of academic strategy in a complex context;
- a substantial record of teaching, research, knowledge exchange, and/or professional practice in art, design or performance;
- experience of shaping strategic direction and influencing developments within a College/organisation/University;
- experience of managing complex human, financial and physical resources;
- experience of managing quality assurance and enhancement activities and processes.

Communication Skills

- you communicate in a compelling and influential way, adapting your style and message to diverse internal or external audiences in an inclusive and accessible way.

Leadership and Management

- you motivate and lead effectively, setting the direction of one or more functions and

- promoting collaboration across formal boundaries;
- experience of effective performance management.

Research, Teaching & Learning or Professional Practice

- you apply innovative approaches in leading academic programmes, teaching, learning or professional practice to support excellent teaching, pedagogy and inclusivity;
- you contribute to advancing professional practice/research or scholarly activity in your own area of specialism, applying your research to develop learning and assessment practice;
- you share best practice with others inside and outside your organisation.

Planning and Managing Resources

- you effectively plan, prioritise and manage complex projects, activities or services to achieve long-term objectives.

Teamwork

- you build effective teams, networks or communities of practice and foster constructive cross-team collaboration by promoting the values of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Student Experience or Customer Service

- you make a significant contribution to improving the student or customer experience to promote an inclusive environment.

Creativity, Innovation and Problem-Solving

- you initiate innovative solutions to problems, which have a strategic impact.

11. Appointment Details and How to Apply

University of the Arts London is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society (www.society-search.com).

Applications should consist of:

1. an up-to-date curriculum vitae;
2. a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification, and explaining your interest in, and suitability for, the Dean role;
3. contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

General advice on how to write a **strong CV** and **strong covering letter** can be found on our website.

To upload your documents via Society's website, [click here](#).

We aim to be an equal opportunities employer embracing diversity in all areas of activity and we are working actively to increase representation among academic staff of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, people who are LGBTQ+, people with a disability, or learning difference, from different nations and regions, or from a less advantaged socio-economic background.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 12 noon (GMT) on **Tuesday 24th February 2026**. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview which will take place in person at the College on **Friday 13th March 2026**. The preferred start date for this position is by the end of June 2026, but this is open to discussion with the University's preferred candidate.

Appointment to this post will be subject to appropriate checks, including necessary statutory checks such as proof of right to work in the UK, Disclosure and Barring Service checks, a satisfactory health check and other due diligence checks.

We are committed to ensuring that anyone can access our application processes. This includes people with hearing, sight, mobility, and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to this document in an alternative format, wish to apply in a different format, or need any other reasonable adjustments made for you (including at interview), please contact us at inclusion@society-search.com.

We also welcome suggestions or comments about any more general access improvements we should consider.



Photo: Paul Cochrane



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Society is a global executive search firm and a certified B Corporation. 10% of our profits go to charitable causes through The Society Foundation. With colleagues in the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand, we solve senior hiring challenges for responsible businesses and purpose-driven organisations around the world.

We believe that the right candidate, placed in the right organisation at the right time, can initiate a chain reaction of transformative change that will help to deliver a more inclusive and sustainable future.

